MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Soil and Water Conservation Program

Quarterly Update
May 2023

SWCP STAFF UPDATE

Ashley McDaniel joined the program in January as a district coordinator for the southwest region, filling the position vacated by Josh Poynor. While she is a new face in the program, Ashley has been with the department's Water Pollution Control program for the last eight years. Ashley is a graduate of Missouri State University, where she majored in wildlife conservation and management with a double minor in agronomy and biology. She is also a member of the Missouri State Ag Alumni Committee.

In her spare time, Ashley enjoys hunting, fishing, baking and photography. But during the summer, you will most likely find Ashley and her husband of 10 years, along with their two daughters, enjoying time at the lake.

Ashley Taylor joined the program in March as a district coordinator for the southeast region, filling Camden Bryant's vacant position. She is a 2022 graduate of Southeast Missouri State University, where she majored in wildlife conservation and a minored in agriculture.

Ashley and her husband John have three children. They also own and operate a cow-calf operation they purchased from Johns grandfather two years ago. In her spare time, Ashely's hobbies include camping, beekeeping, photography, hiking and volunteering on the Missouri Stream Team.

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The Soil and Water Conservation program is pleased to announce the addition of an archaeologist to our staff. This new staff member will conduct archaeological surveys for both state cost and federal cost-share projects. Lee Johns was hired in February to fill this position.

Lee is currently a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Missouri. In addition to his archaeologist duties, Lee is teaching archaeological field methods and conducting research on prehistoric Native Americans of the southeastern United States with the university. He is also an adjunct professor for the University of North Florida, where his research specialty areas include flaked stone debitage, lithic analysis, lithic use-wear and archaeological human osteology.

Myranda Alford joined the program in March as a district coordinator for the northcentral region, filling Kelsey Kempker's vacant position. For the last four years, Myranda has been with the department's Water Protection Program, where she was as a permit writer and treatment facility inspector.

She is a 2019 graduate of Missouri State University, where she received a bachelor's degree in natural resources and a minor in agronomy. In her spare time, Myranda and her fiancé enjoy spending time outdoors, horseback riding, fishing and exploring nature with their dogs.

THE RESOLUTION PASSED... SO NOW WHAT?

Each November, the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosts their annual training conference for soil and water district staff, board members and partner agencies. This conference includes the association's business meeting, during which districts have the opportunity to present resolutions for consideration. Resolutions are then voted on and if passed by the majority of the voting body, the resolutions are provided to the program office. The program presents the resolutions to the Soil and Water Districts Commission, which then provides guidance to the program about how to proceed. Typically, the commission suggests that resolutions be presented to either the District Operations and Program Delivery Committee or the Cost-share Practices Committee. These committees consist of district staff, board members, partner agencies and program staff. After committee discussion, if the resolution in question needs commission approval, the program office takes their recommendation to a Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting for consideration. It is important to remember that not all resolutions result in policy change.

Commission Meeting

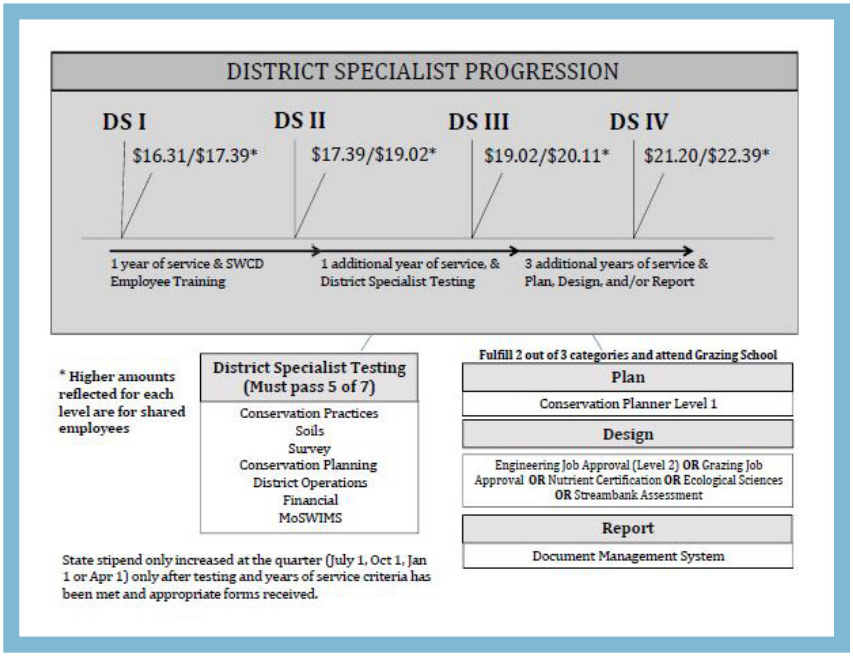
DISTRICT SPECIALIST TRAINING

Like many organizations, Soil and Water Districts have experienced high levels of staff turnover. Here at the program, significant thought has been put in to how best to provide training to new staff in a uniform and efficient manner. While staff trainings are held in a group setting, this is not meant to replace one-on-one interactions. Group training sessions should be considered an additional tool for districts to learn from each other.

In November 2021, the first regional trainings for district staff were held. These district trainings are targeted for newer staff within their first few months of employment. They are also required training for district specialists to advance on the progression line. To date, 90 district staff have completed the training. Each participant is surveyed after the training and so far, there has been a positive response from attendees.

"The district specialist training was a helpful refresher on some of the original training I received during my first month with the district, a good way to pick up on some things I might have missed the first time through training," said Stefanie Thomas, Grundy County district specialist.

This training is geared toward administrative and policy topics, while NRCS takes the lead on technical training for district staff. The district training includes an overview of the program, district funds, quarterly report process, allocation and supplemental process, brief synopsis of the Missouri Sunshine law, audit process, lifecycle of a cost-share contract and includes time for discussion and questions. Please contact your district coordinator if you need this training.


DISTRICT SPECIALIST PROGRESSION
DS I
DS II
DS III
DS IV
$16.31/$17.39*
$17.39/$19.02*
$19.02/$20.11*
$21.20/$22.39*
1 year of service & SWCD Employee Training
1 additional year of service, & District Specialist Testing
3 additional years of service & Plan, Design, and/or Report
* Higher amounts reflected for each level are for shared employees
District Specialist Testing (Must pass 5 of 7)
Conservation Practices
Soils
Survey
Conservation Planning
District Operations
Financial
MoSWIMS
Fulfill 2 out of 3 categories and attend Grazing School
Plan
Conservation Planner Level 1
Design
Engineering Job Approval (Level 2) OR Grazing Job Approval OR Nutrient Certification OR Ecological Sciences OR Streambank Assessment
Report
Document Management System
State stipend only increased at the quarter (July 1, Oct 1, Jan 1 or Apr 1) only after testing and years of service criteria has been met and appropriate forms received.

END OF YEAR REMINDERS

As we head into the fourth quarter, there are a few things to note.

Please ensure that cost-share payments are submitted in a timely manner. This is important because contract payments are reviewed in the order they are received and once we reach our appropriation authority, some cost share payments may have to be rolled into FY24.

The program's cost-share appropriation authority for FY23 is $40 Million. Each year the program allows districts to over-obligate or exceed the appropriation authority. This is because historically the program pays out approximately 87% of contracts that are obligated for various reasons, such as cancellations and roll-overs. However, in January, cost share was halted due to the high amount of obligations. In the last few days before the cut off, districts were able to obligate nearly an additional $3 million, putting the total obligation at approximately $49 million.

In addition to the above note, please remember that the contract payment review process allows the program to ensure that Missouri taxpayer money is provided to landowners in a timely and accurate manner. During the review process, the program tries to remain as consistent as possible. It is important that districts include any relevant notes that would aid in the review process, such as items that make the contract unique or information that clarifies questions that may arise.

The Cooperator Authorization form must be filled out accurately and list the correct name and address that is listed in MoSWIMS. Please remember to check the EFT status of contracts before submitting them for payment. The program cannot process payments that do not have an active EFT status and must return those payments.

In addition, please remember that shared employees must have 200 hours by the end of the fiscal year to continue to receive the additional stipend from state funds. Any expenses for FY23, including payroll tax liabilities, must be paid on or before June 30, 2023.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cover Crops can be submitted for payment May 1, 2023

Envirothon May 4, 2023

Component Cost Spreadsheet submission May 31, 2023

Commission Meeting June 7, 2023

DRUPAL AND NEWSLETTER REMINDERS

Kelsey Kempker

My name is Kelsey Kempker, I have been with the Soil and Water Program as a coordinator for the North Central Region for the past six years. Back in July, I accepted the Information and Education Specialist position vacated by Jake Wilson. As part of my new position, I will be sending out a quarterly newsletter. Please feel free to reach out with any topics or suggestions you would like to see in coming issues. I can be reached at Kelsey.Kempker@dnr.mo.gov or 573-751-8160. In addition to the newsletter, I am also the point of contact for the website (Drupal) maintenance and can address any questions you may have about your district website.